VERDANT LORD

by Hiroshi Takashige & Atsushi Soga

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Verdant Lord v2 Ch 14

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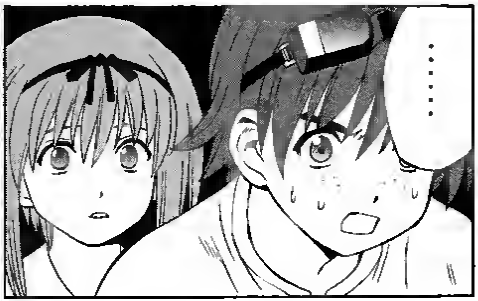
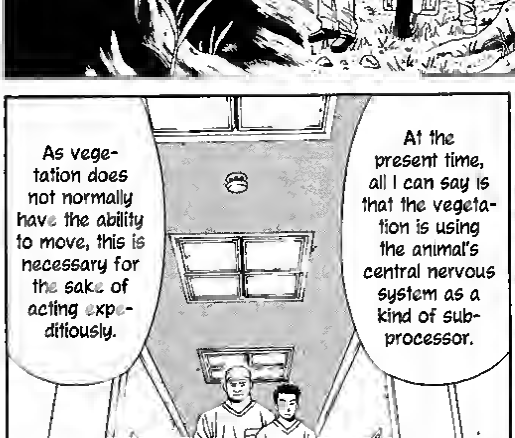
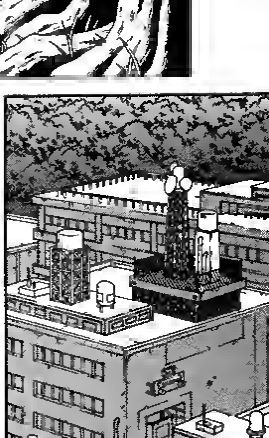
I've come to understand ...
WHAT'S WRONG?!
.....
It's a corpse ...
The corpse is standing, and its condition is just like my body's
The meaning of this body...
AN-CHAN?!
!!
DON'T COME HERE!!

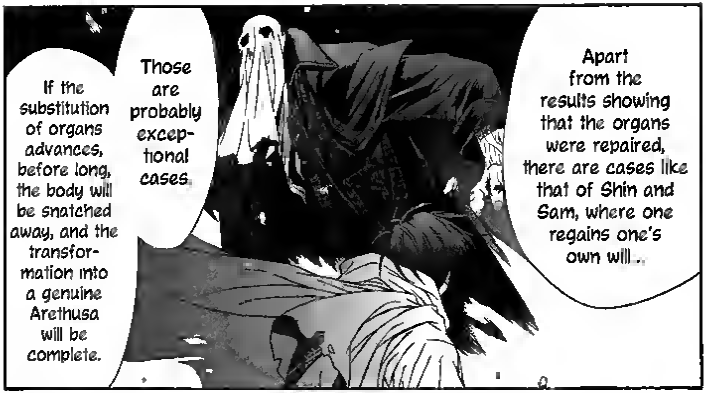


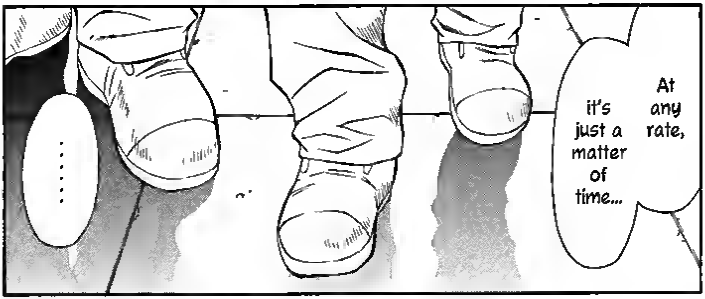
... Don't look...

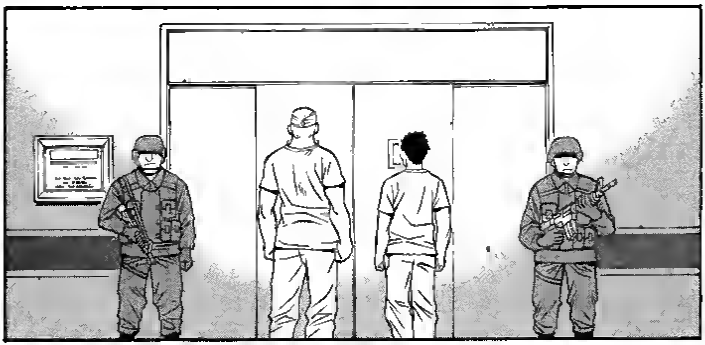

As vegetation does not normally have the ability to move, this is necessary for the sake of acting expeditiously.
At the present time, all I can say is that the vegetation is using the animal's central nervous system as a kind of subprocessor.



I see. One could even say they're practically immortal.
That is, until it can replace those organs with vegetation...
That is why it continues to sustain a portion of the brain, and every organ that requires the use of the brain.
Hm?
However...
How much time would it take to completely take over a body?
I don't know...


Apart from the results showing that the organs were repaired, there are cases like that of Shin and Sam, where one regains one's own will...
Those are probably exceptional cases.
If the substitution of organs advances, before long, the body will be snatched away, and the transformation into a genuine Arethusa will be complete.


At any rate, it's just a matter of time...
.....



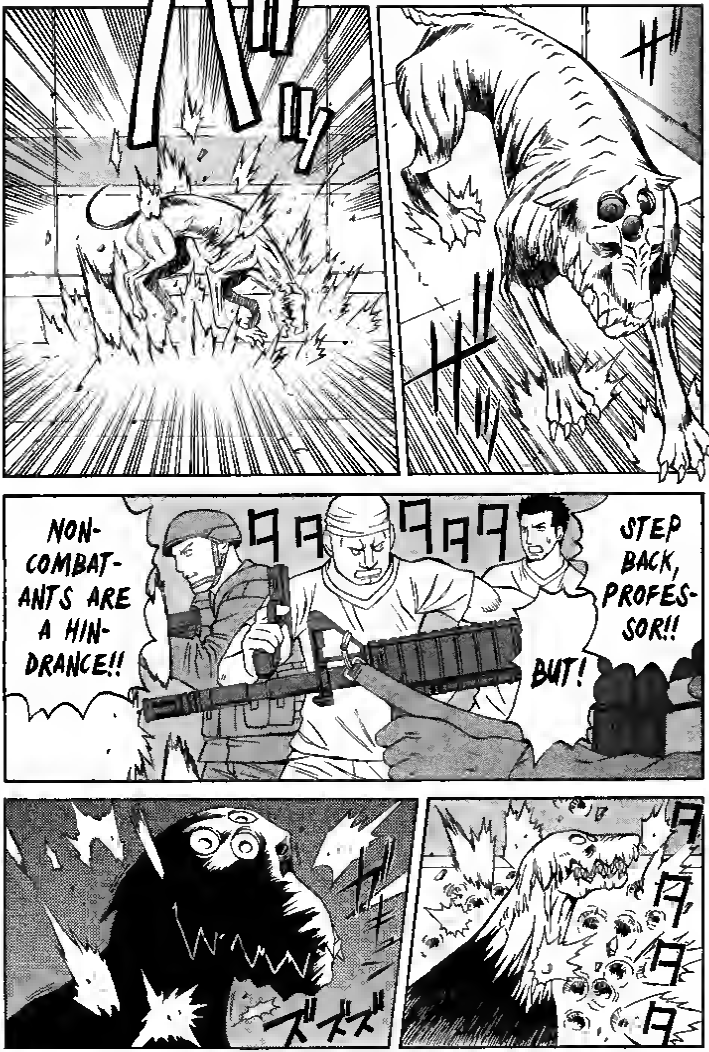
ARE THERE ANY ABNORMALITIES?!
THERE ARE NONE.
ボ
ゴ

?!!
IT CAME BACK TO LIFE?!
IMPOS-SIBLE! ALMOST ALL THE INTER-NAL ORGANS WERE EX-TRACTED!
ゴゴゴ
GET AWAY FROM THE DOOR!!!

AAH

You mon-ster...
ZUR YUN

ROAR
.....


NON-COMBAT-ANTS ARE A HIN-DRANCE!!
STEP BACK, PROFES-SOR!!
BUT!
ガキーン
ズズズ

ガ
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ガ
CHE...

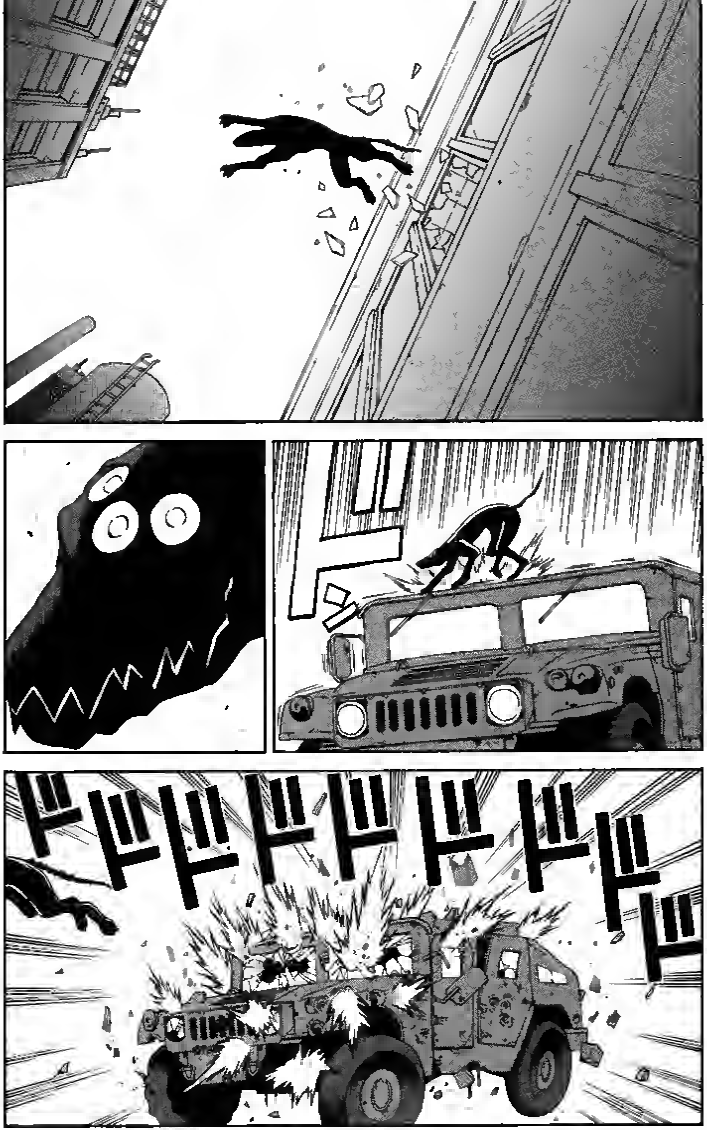
ROOAR
UWA
AA!!

FUN NU....
RSOOO

OO
OU
SHOCK
RYA
A
A
A
A
!!!

!!
BU FUU UU-!!
DON'T LET IT GET AWAY!!
フフ.

I do amateur wrestling, you see
No matter how strong the opponent is, if they don't have proper footing then they can't bring out their true power
BLOCK THE PASSAGE!
...You should change jobs and become a wrestler ...
Being a soldier is my calling.
.....
Is that so
ｶｯ
ｶｯ


ドドド

WE DID IT!!

?!
ガシャン
ガシャン
ハイテ

I have a rough guess...
...There is no remaining organic matter...
Have you examined the observation records to determine what happened?
What a frightening processing capacity
Allowing it to bask in light for prolonged periods of time may also have some relation.
As far as reconfiguration is concerned, it is possible that where nutrients are lacking, the energy obtained from the decomposing host's flesh can be the root of the advancing vegetation.

As for that youngster, this is a truth he could not possibly tolerate...
A parasitic plant that grows until it devours its host, huh ..
Looks like even you can't help but sympathize with him this time.
?
I hold the same opinion.
...That's true Let's hide this from Shin for the moment...
No. It's just that he will obstruct the mission if he becomes any more difficult to handle.
Is that so.
.....

Wh-what was that...
.....
I said "Don't come here!"
Why did you go and do as you pleased?!
But... it's because I thought there was something there...
WHEN I TELL YOU NOT TO COME, DO WHAT I SAY!
IF YOU DON'T, I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOUR LIVES WHEN IT GETS DANGEROUS!!

A-anyway, be careful from now on!
... I got it ...
.....?
What's wrong?
"The responsibility for those kids lies in your hands."
Dammit ...
Now that I think about it, I was saying the same things as that baldy...

...
Really?
.....
...
You okay?
...
Yeah...
SOME-
THING
LIKE
THAT IS
NOTHING
AT ALL!
I WAS
JUST
SUR-
PRISED
IS ALL!!
ばっ

I'm fine, just fine!
ぶん
ぶん
……
Yeah ~
ぱ
レン

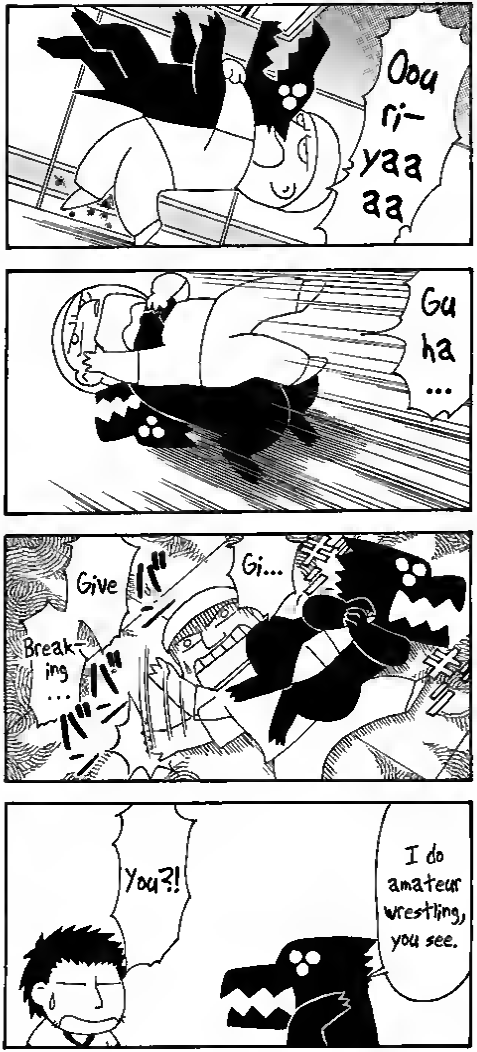
I've got to pull myself to-gether.....
OW...

Status on the escaped monster.
And the investigation?
It's already outside the facility.
They're tracking it, but its whereabouts are still unknown
CHE...
.....
.....
Is something the matter ...?

Hmph.. Well then, it seems there is no longer any need to hide it.
..Yes?
.....
Is it the encounter with the group of human corpse Arethusa...?
Yes...
Though... what will become of him...?
I don't know.
Ask the professor about that or something.
BUT THAT WOULD BE TOO CRUEL!
Field Second Lieutenant,
we are in the middle of a mission. Please save your personal impressions for later.

.....
Contact Shin.
Under-stood.
.....
Leave the present situation as is.
Prioritize the pursuit of the Are-thusa.
UNDER
STOOD

DRAWING / Dr. MOROU



Verdant Lord Trivia: "There is no Kansetsuwaza* in amateur wrestling"

*TL Note: Kansetsuwaza is a joint locking technique in Judo

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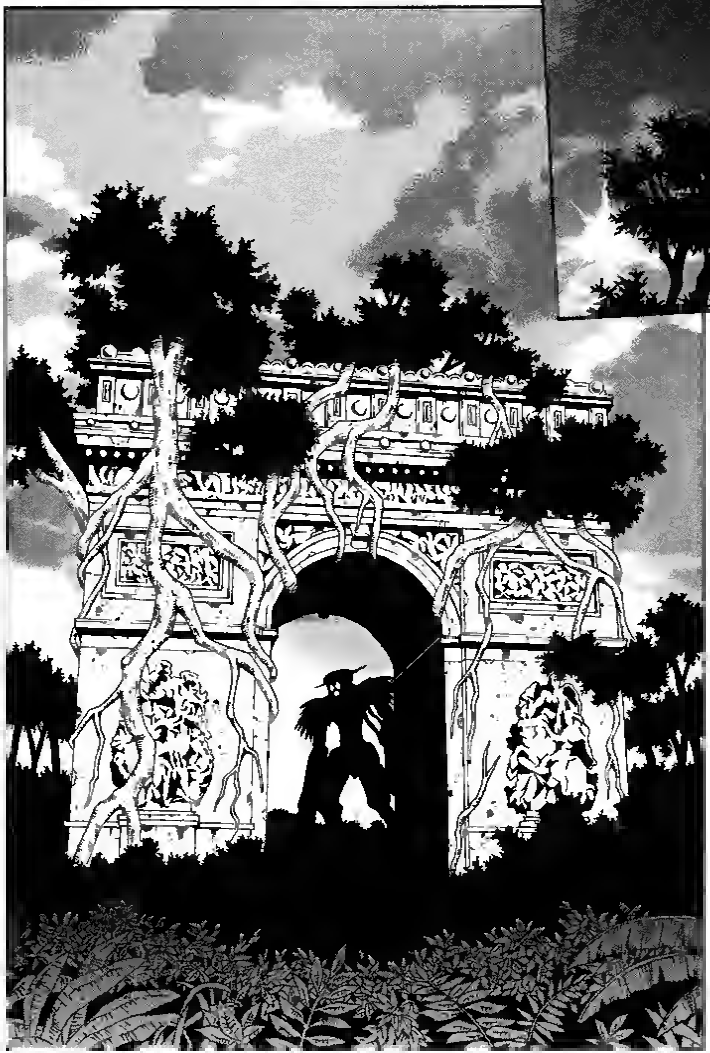

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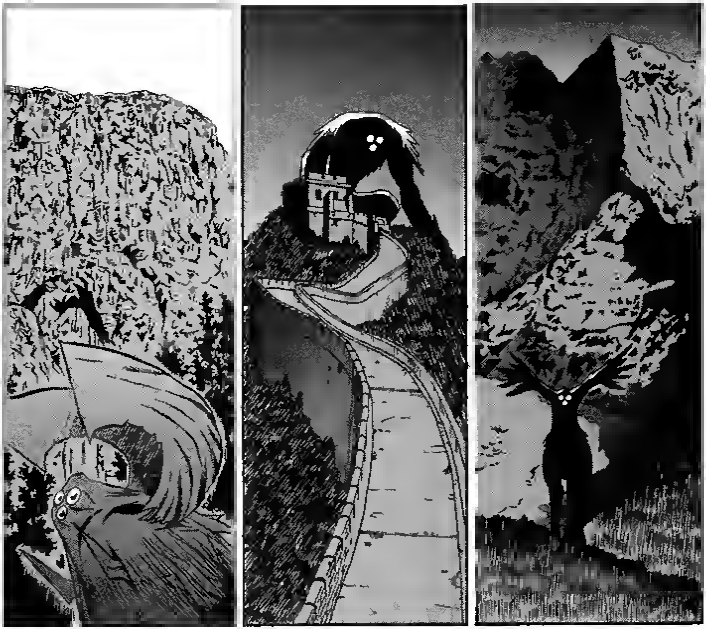
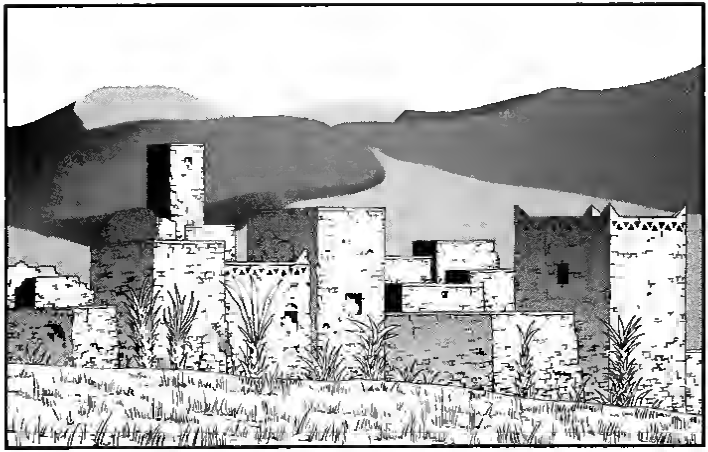
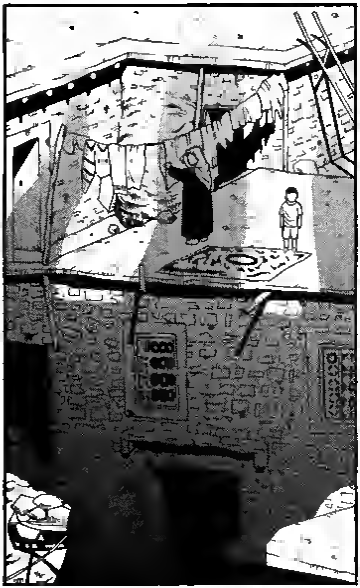


Sahara Desert.





YOU DESERT FIEND!
I'm asking you....
Do you have some sort of grudge against us?!

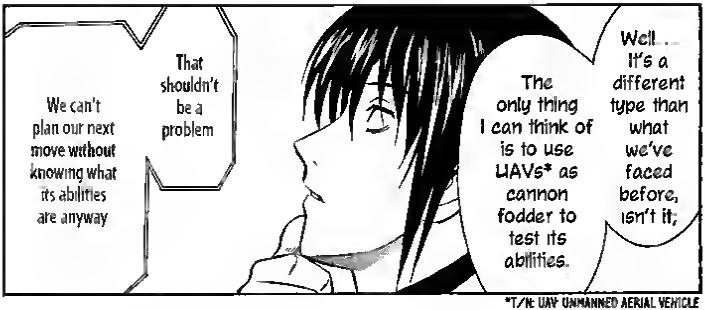
The Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic Ocean.
Even so, it's huge...
We are currently pursuing the target 10 km ahead of us at a depth of 40m and a speed of 15 knots

Captain,
We've already been pursuing the target for 8 hours now.
Are we going to carry on like this? Is there a request to have it taken out in one shot?
Both the navy and the army have refused to take on this new type.
Estimating from the active sonar, the target is at least 2 to 3 times larger than our ship...

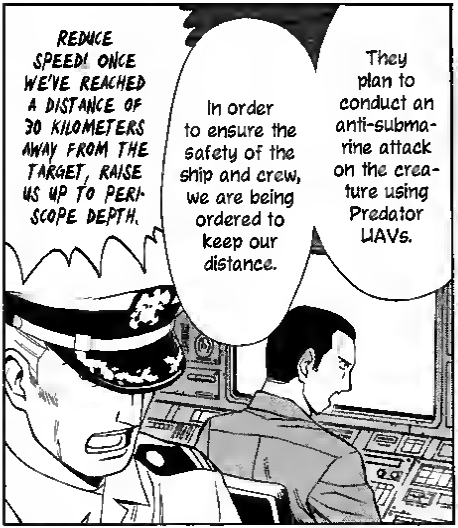
I also don't want to send the crew to a watery grave, let alone dump radioactive material in the sea.
We don't know what the enemy is capable of, and we can't force a ship that is just about to be decommissioned to do the impossible..
It remains to be seen whether this thing is the only one of its kind in the sea.
It seems like its movement pattern is completely different when it's on land.
Well, it's just a giant monster circling the gulf idly anyway
and if need be...
All we can do for now is prepare for battle in case it bares its fangs,

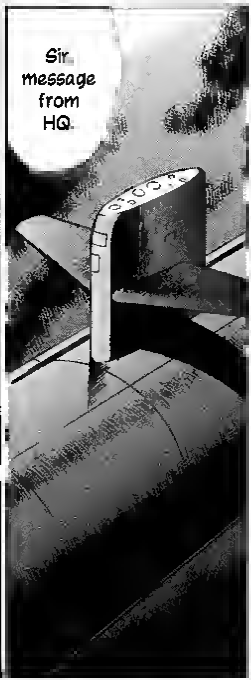
...retreat at full speed.
ゴクリ…
SFX: GULP...
What will we do if it's faster than us?
……
You have to ask?
Actually, never mind, I can imagine.

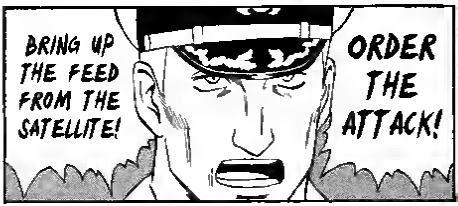
The nuclear submarine detected the Arethusa?!
Yes.
That's wise.
We don't know what kind of foe we're facing yet.
They are currently observing it from a distance
We'll send you all the data we can gather on the Arethusa.
We're relying on you to suggest our next course of action


Well... It's a different type than what we've faced before, isn't it;
The only thing I can think of is to use UAVs* as cannon fodder to test its abilities.
That shouldn't be a problem
We can't plan our next move without knowing what its abilities are anyway

*T/N: UAV: UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE


REDUCE SPEED! ONCE WE'VE REACHED A DISTANCE OF 30 KILOMETERS AWAY FROM THE TARGET, RAISE US UP TO PERISCOPE DEPTH.
In order to ensure the safety of the ship and crew, we are being ordered to keep our distance.
They plan to conduct an anti-submarine attack on the creature using Predator UAVs.





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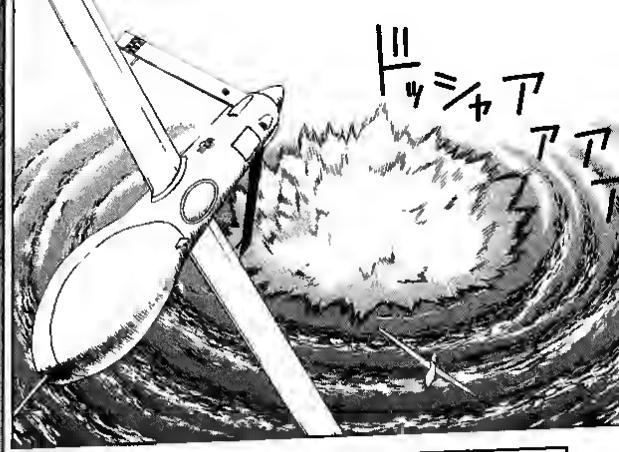
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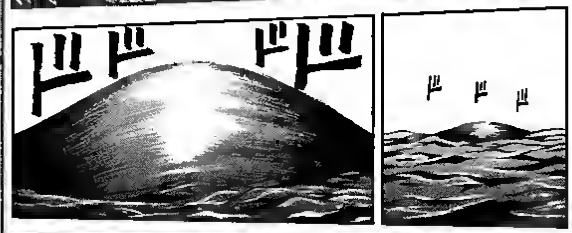
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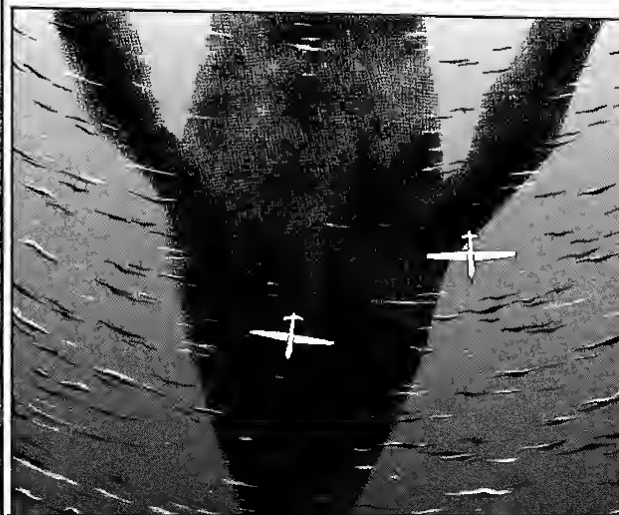

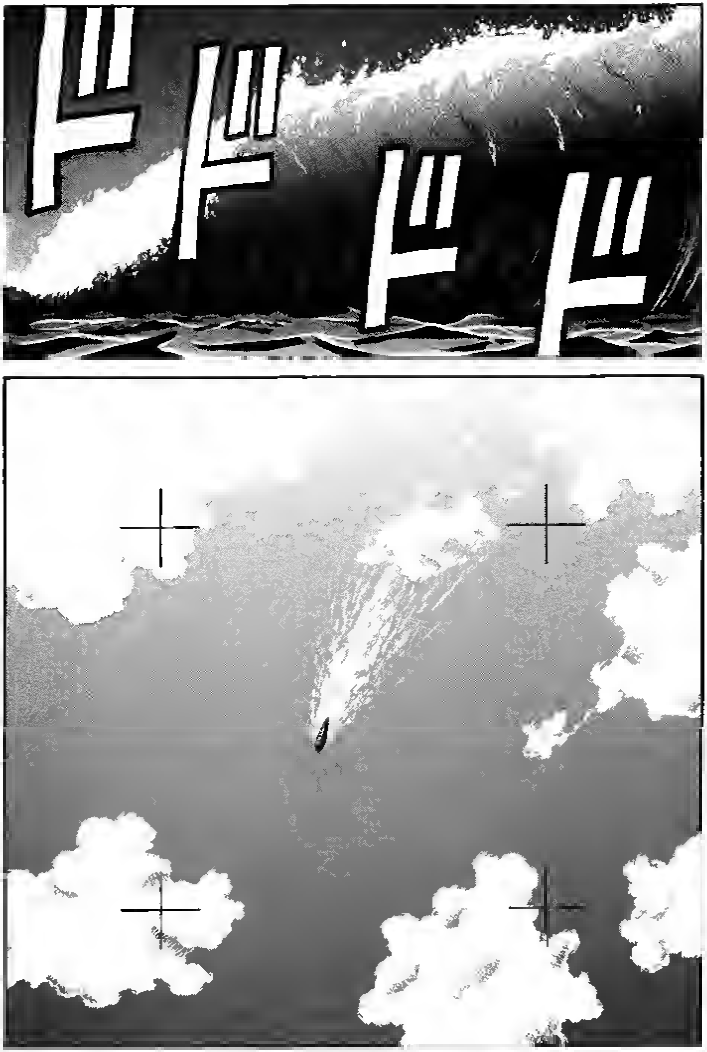
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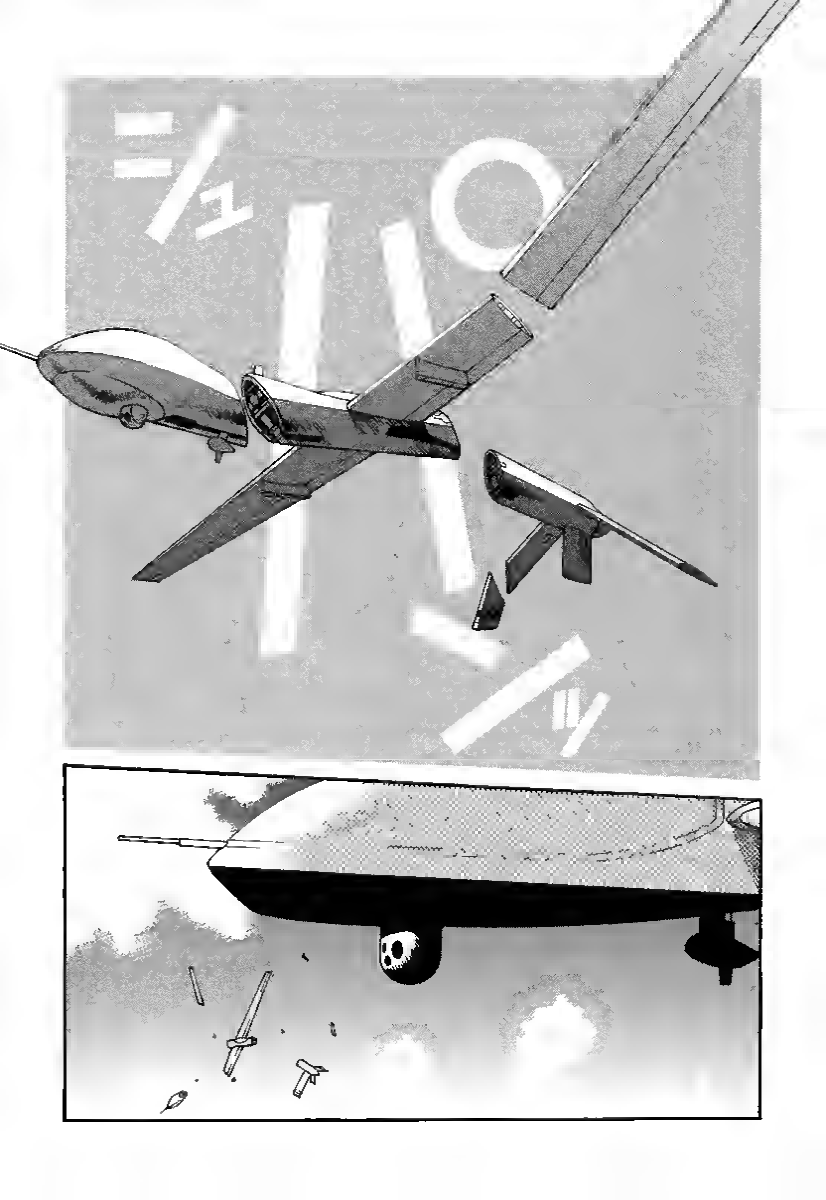
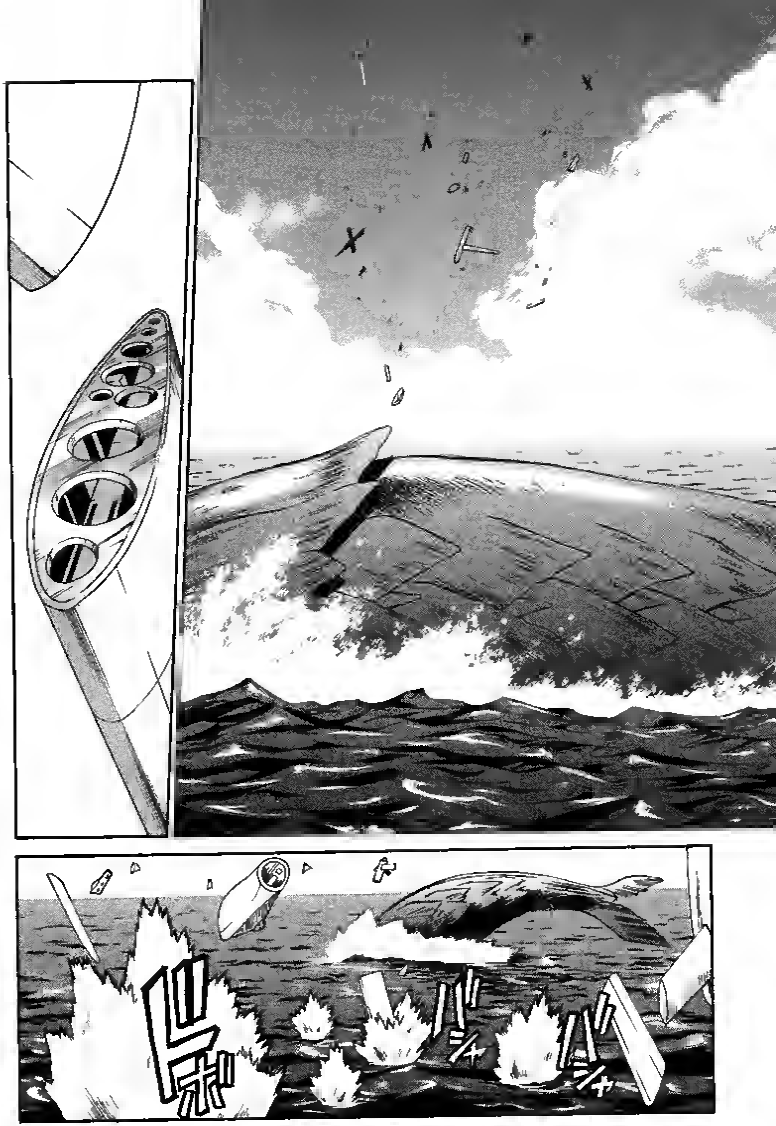
DID WE HIT IT?!
EVEN THOUGH ALL THE BOMBS EXPLODED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE TARGET, THE TARGET REMAINS UNSCATHED!
WE'VE REACHED PERISCOPE DEPTH, MAINTAIN SPEED.
CURRENT SITUATION UNCLEAR!
It's huge
ドドド

What a horrible noise...
Is it that thing's heart-beat?!
I don't know.. but
It seems like it's compressing something..

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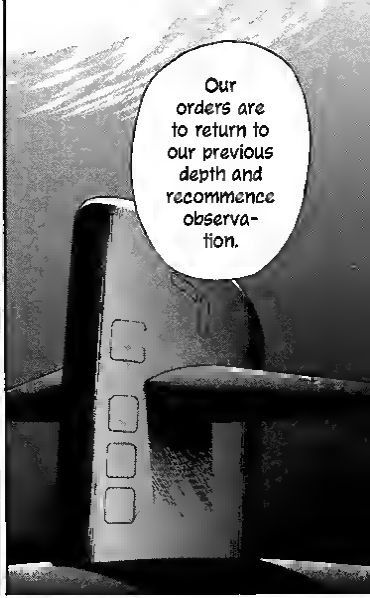
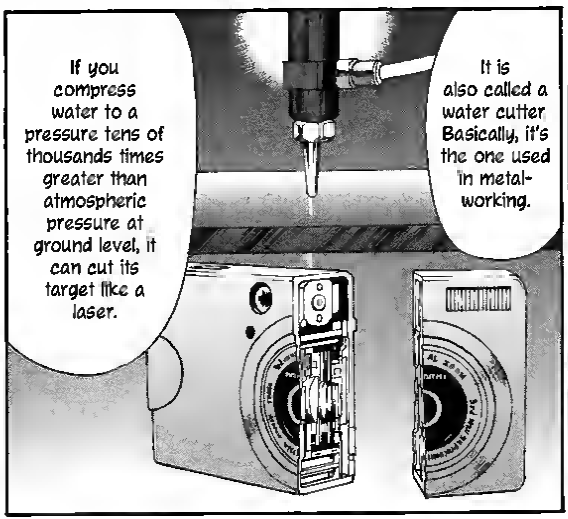
バシャ

.....
Did you see that, doctor?! What the hell was that?!
I didn't see any change on the infrared monitor... and I can't confirm it without inspecting the wrecks of the UAVs themselves, but...
They were probably jets of water.
Something did indeed come flying out with every cut... what an interesting creature

IS IT COMING TOWARDS US?
No sir


Our orders are to return to our previous depth and recommence observation.

.....
Right, then start pursuing it again before we lose sight of it.


If you compress water to a pressure tens of thousands times greater than atmospheric pressure at ground level, it can cut its target like a laser.
It is also called a water cutter. Basically, it's the one used in metal-working.
Water jets...?

So there's nothing we can do then...
Well... not yet, anyway.
The water it uses as ammunition is in inexhaustible supply, so it would be safer not to approach it at all.
It's relatively easy to build the necessary pressure, and it can even be used underwater at close range.
Do you have something in mind?
We're in the middle of developing a jammer that will disrupt its electromagnetic interaction.
Well, I can't guarantee how effective it will be yet, but...

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緑の王

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マガジンZKC

それは失われた覇権を取り戻すかのような
圧倒的で、しかしあまりにも静かな支配だった。
二十一世紀初め、地球規模で世界を襲った
〝植物異常大繁殖（プラントバースト）〟は何故起きたのか？
緑没した世界を闊歩する〝行動する植物（アレトウーサ）〟たちの
目的と〝植物異常大繁殖（プラントバースト）〟との関連性を追い米国大陸を
旅し続ける相馬真は、自分と同じように
植物に寄生され超人的な能力を得た男・サムと出会う。
狂気のモンスターとして死後の今を生きるサムに
自分の未来を重ね、怒りと恐怖を覚える真！
だがその前に、絶望的なまでの事実が突き付けられる…。

この地球を襲った大自然の牙は
どんな結末を用意しているというのか!?

KCZ0202

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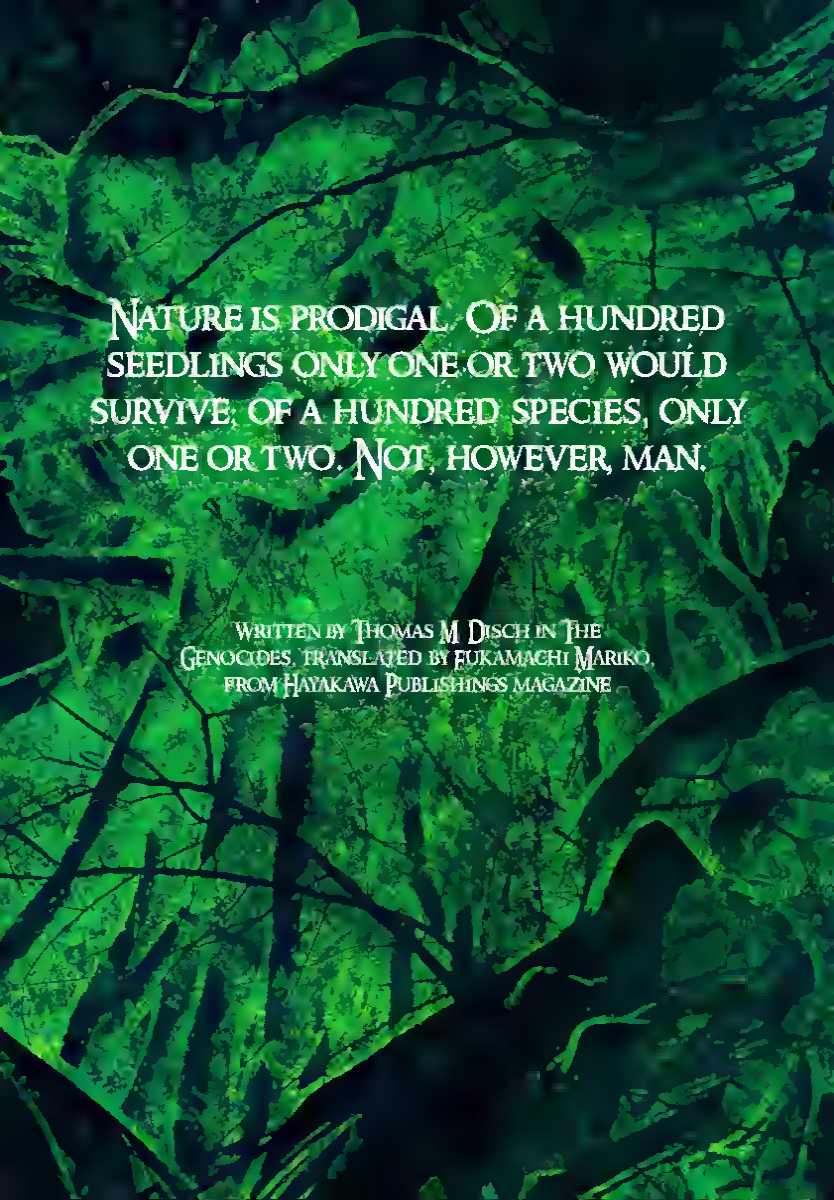
設定／高野真吾　デザイン／福地仁
原作／たかしげ宙　漫画／曽我篤士


Nature is prodigal. Of a hundred seedlings only one or two would survive; of a hundred species, only one or two. Not, however, man.
Written by Thomas M Disch in The Genocides, translated by Fukamachi Mariko, from Hayakawa Publishings magazine

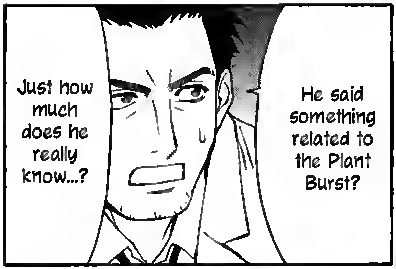
In ancient times---
Phototrophs, known to be the ancestor of plants, greatly increased their population in the sea by acquiring photosynthesis.
However, their excessive growth greatly altered the Earth's atmospheric composition at the time.

The decreasing amount of methane, a strong greenhouse gas, led to the crumbling of the balance between Earth's absorption and emission of heat from the sun.
Photosynthetic processes converted carbon dioxide into oxygen, which oxidized methane to produce carbon dioxide and water.
The glaciers enveloped both high and low latitudes, sharply lowering the temperature of the planet's surface by reflecting the sun's rays.
forming a blisteringly cold world at -50°C.
The vast glaciers enveloped even the equator,

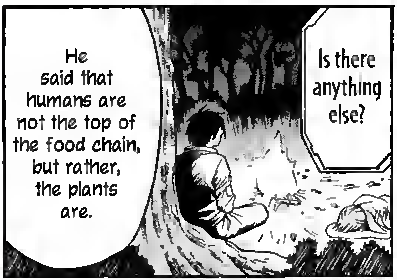
This phenomenon called Snowball Earth occurred 600 million years ago.
Thus, the entire planet soon became encased in ice.

Earth should have remained in its state as a frozen planet.
However, the Earth kept changing.
Volcanic activity increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, allowing the Earth to retain more heat. After millions of years, the temperature of the Earth rose by an average of 100°C.

Some speculate that over the course of this, greater beings came into existence, but... that doesn't really matter right now.
After that, as phototrophs began to repopulate, carbon dioxide levels diminished, and the Earth cooled down accordingly.
Compared to this, the Ice Age is nothing.
That is the gist of the Snowball Earth hypothesis.
Why have you suddenly taken an interest in things like this?


Just how much does he really know...?
He said something related to the Plant Burst?

That day..
Ken said several things that bothered me.
One of those was about the Snowball Earth hypothesis.


Is there anything else?
He said that humans are not the top of the food chain, but rather, the plants are.

As evidence, the first living beings to emerge from the oceans were none other than - plants, or so he says.

Be that as it may,
afterwards, the plants were mere stepping stones for the growth of insects and other creatures.
Even I know that much.

But no matter how much I think about it, I can't understand how it's related.
I didn't even have any idea what he meant by Snowball Earth until I heard your explanation just now.

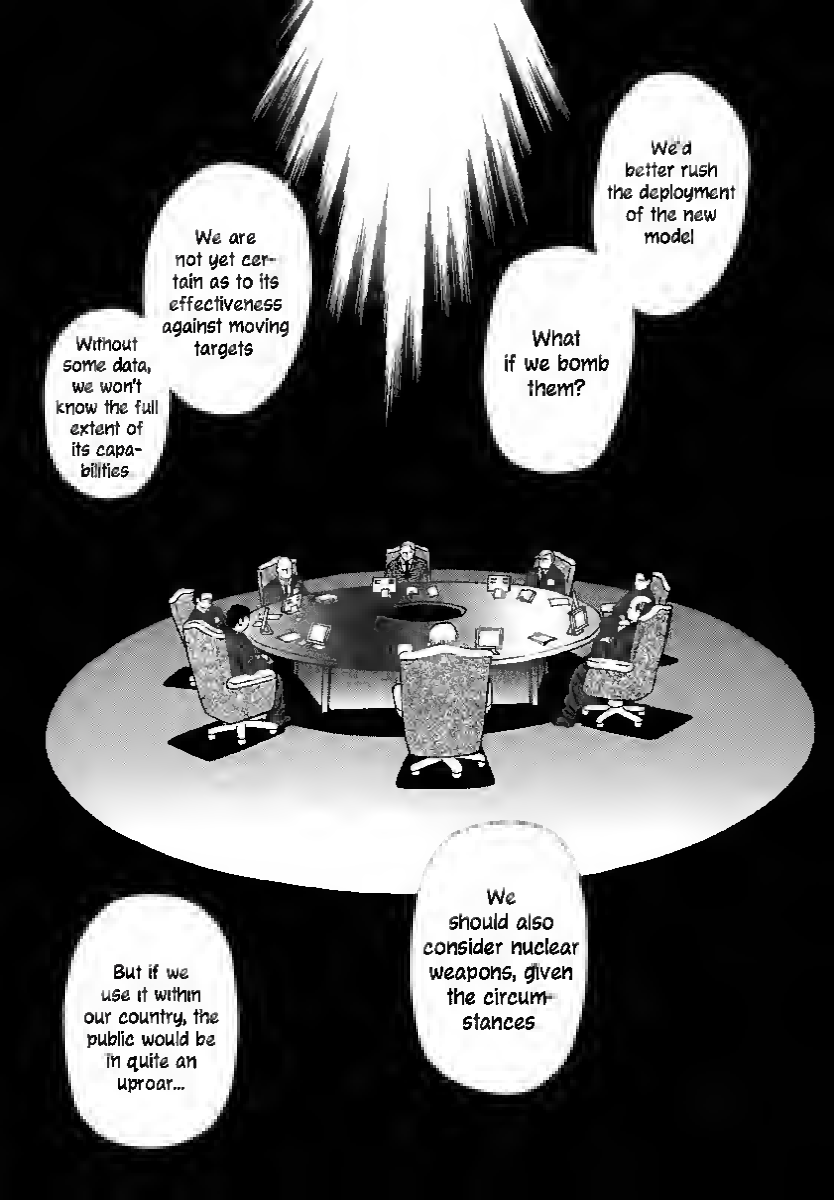
Who exactly is your brother? I think that somehow he's gone beyond being just a mere scientist
There is no need for you to take up his impossible mission, but...
Anyway, not even the US army can find him?
It's the literal translation in Japanese
??
Also, about Sam...
There's no corpse, so he's definitely alive.

It's coming.
ズズン
ピタ
TCH.
WE CAN'T DO A SURPRISE ATTACK ANY-MORE.
COM-MENCE ATTACK!
ワキャキャ
BIKI BIKI

ザザザ
ドドド
ギコ

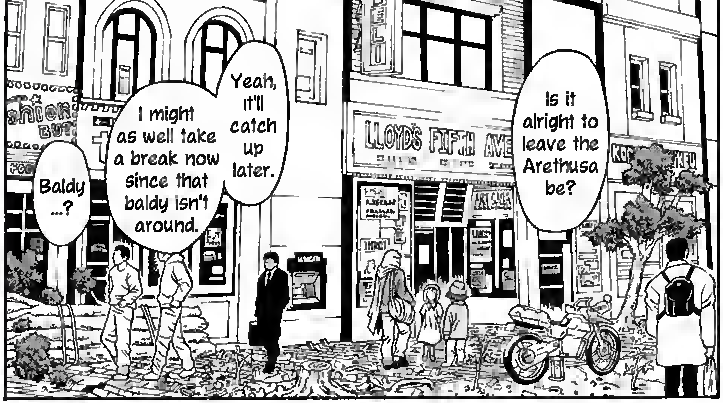
上

First the Air Force, now the Army...
...What a dreadful sight...
ドン
ドン


We'd better rush the deployment of the new model
What if we bomb them?
We are not yet certain as to its effectiveness against moving targets
Without some data, we won't know the full extent of its capabilities
We should also consider nuclear weapons, given the circumstances
But if we use it within our country, the public would be in quite an uproar...

Gentlemen, calm down!
For now, as long as there is no open hostility directed towards us it would be best not to act rashly
However, the trampling of New York...
Could that not have been considered an act of hostility?!
It may just be taken as the rampage of a beast.
At any rate, ordinary people would not even consider the possibility that this is an indication of intellectual behavior.
The current hypothesis is that this is a new species of living organism.
What about the air force incident?!
Now is not the time to announce that these things effortlessly shot down our newest jets.
That would ruin our image.

That is uncertain.
But we cannot reveal that the US military force is powerless in light of current events.
That is, until a proper threat assessment has been conducted, this case will remain highly classified.
Until it is deemed necessary-.
In that case, on what basis do you posit that it is not already too late?
Any effective measures are to be taken accordingly.
That is the final conclusion.
5B
KING
PARTY CENTER


Baldy ...?
I might as well take a break now since that baldy isn't around.
Yeah, it'll catch up later.
Is it alright to leave the Arethusa be?
LLOYDS FIFTH AVE

I didn't steal it!
Haha-n ... that's An-chan
What's that?

Any amount is fine. The withdrawal limit each time is $500
It will only work when our side permits it.
Will this really work...?
ドキ ドキ

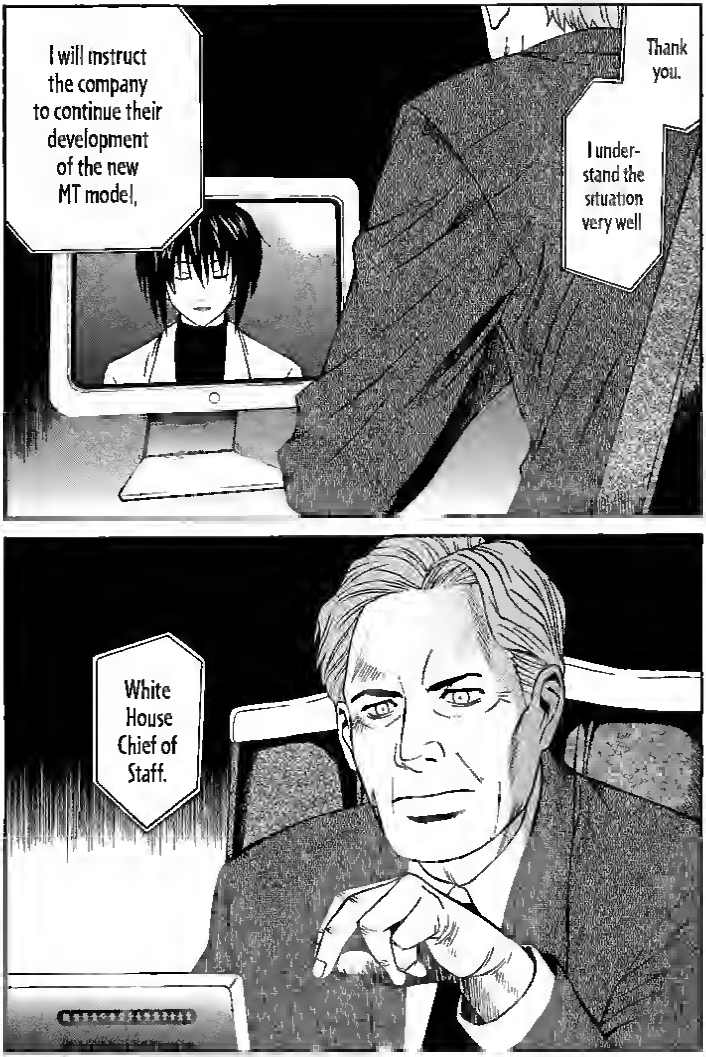
Ohh-nhh!!
THANKS A BUNCH MAJOR! NO, I MEAN GODDESS!
!?
It will be trouble-some if you lose the ID, card, or tran-sponder,
so please make sure to keep them with you at all times
ALRIGHT EVERY-ONE, TELL ME WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO EAT! HOW ABOUT A NICE RESTAURANT MEAL!!
Looking like that...?
Ah...

MOTEL FLAMINGO
Flamingo
MOTOR HOTEL
FREE CAR PORTS DRIVE IN
MOTEL
I'm happy for you, Dina.
Onii-chan should have asked him to buy something too!
It's fine! I'm alright with just food.
THIS WAS MY FIRST BATH SINCE COMING TO AMERICA.
FWAH! THIS IS SO REFRESHING!
Look, Shin...
How is it?

KAH---!! THIS IS SO GOOD!
GULP
GULP
GULP
GULP
GULP
Buergh
Ahh yeah, that's the stuff...
Oops? Sorry, sorry!
IDIOT! PER-VERT!
KYA-HH-!!!
DON'T COME THIS WAY! DON'T COME!!

You really were on the brink of death there...
Aahh, I feel alive again...
.....
ﾌﾞﾙﾙ
What will you do once you catch up with the Arethusa?
---So

How far do you plan on chasing them?
This isn't just about me.
You really don't plan ahead, do you.
Dunno.
Until I get my original body back.
All the way to the Antarctic, if needs be!
... Well,
That's the situation as it stands, doctor.


I will instruct the company to continue their development of the new MT model,
Thank you.
I understand the situation very well
White House Chief of Staff.

I don't intend to experiment on him, nor do I intend on leaving him to his death.
It seems that people are misunderstanding me....
Do you intend to kill him as an experimental subject?
I digress, but what are your intentions regarding your younger brother?
Once it passes the budding stage, there is no way to remove it completely
It's physically impossible
It's just that I can't do anything about it right now
If even a miniscule piece was left, it would be the same as before,
Unless we remove it fundamentally
Even if we cut the body to pieces to remove it---

How were the results of your experiments?
Depending on the circumstances, a victim might appear.
It's quite scary ...
This was cultivated from a sample of Arethusa's tissue.
This is...?
.....
We do not know why,
but...
!?
Yes
However, if we continue to nourish it, it will not grow into a mere tree.
... It looks like an ordinary tree.

This is the result of introducing the Arethusa to an experimental animal immediately after its death.
The organism enveloping the dog is growing at a pace that far outstrips the natural growth of a tree.
After 72 hours, it became like this.
It can't be, then the Arethusa...
.....

You're saying that it would grow in all life forms on Earth like a parasite!?
That... gigantic Arethusa!!?
Then... your younger brother too will eventually...?
.....
Yes,

It is possible that everything will become Arethusa
In the worst case scenario, when living organisms die...

If we leave things as they are,
he will also become an Arethusa.

ガシ
MORGUE
ガシガシ
MORGUE
ガシ
ガシ
POLICE
バカ

ガラ
ガラ
ガラ
ガシ
ヒタ…ッ

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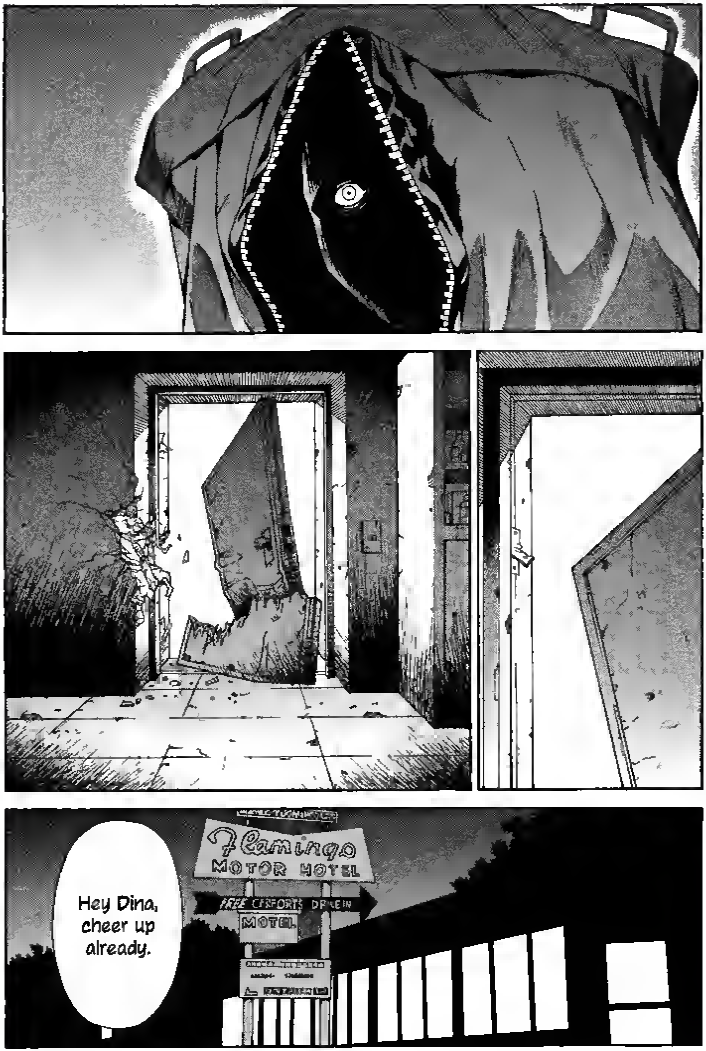

Hey Dina, cheer up already.
Flamingo
MOTOR HOTEL
FREE CURIOSITY DRILL-IN
MOTEL

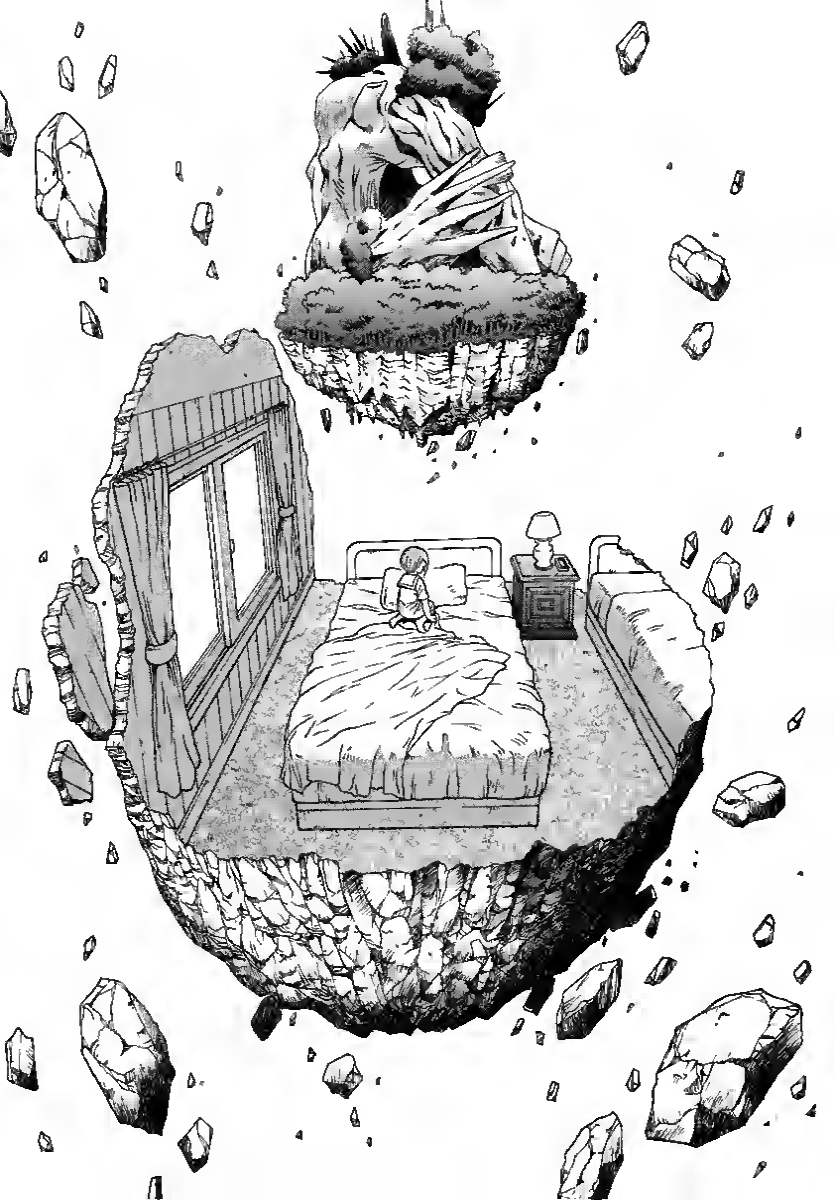
...Listen. This guy's pushing himself pretty hard in lots of ways.
I'm not really mad or anything
.....
It's the burden of being an adult.
He's forcing himself to look like he's in good spirits, because he thinks if he let himself feel down, you'd feel responsible.
I know ..
I get the sofa?
Ah, drats ...
I KNOW!

A special order container...?
What of the contents?
SLIDE
The sender is unsigned as well.
So I'm sure.
Well, it's been treated with the utmost secrecy

Is something the matter?
... I've figured out the sender.
Please deliver this to my lab as soon as possible.

!
Emer-
gency
radio..
It's from
the sector
those kids
are staying
at. The
police's
...
IT IS
THOUGHT TO
BE A THEFT
POLICE ARE
PATROLLING
THE VICINITY
—EMERGENCY
SITUATION
ONE CORPSE IS
MISSING FROM
THE STATION'S
MORTUARY
This type
of incident
has occurred
several times
in other
places...
A missing
corpse...?

……
Toilet-



N-

ドン
カ
ラ

N...
NO-
...na.
Dina...
Dina.

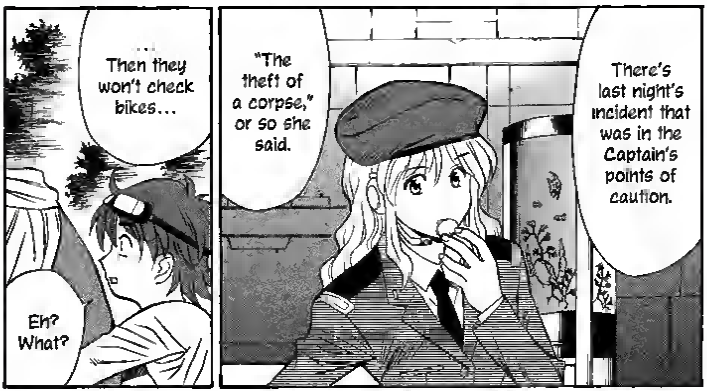
Dina!
Hey!
Are you okay?
.....
He-
Hey?
?

Alright...
This block is in heightened emergency alert status
As for security?
In the worst case scenario, for the sake of reducing the number of victims.
We will be the only ones undertaking this dissection,
For the sake of maintaining secrecy, and...
Perhaps it's the scholar's nature. My curiosity is winning
At least for now
How about you, Doctor Law?
Are you ready?

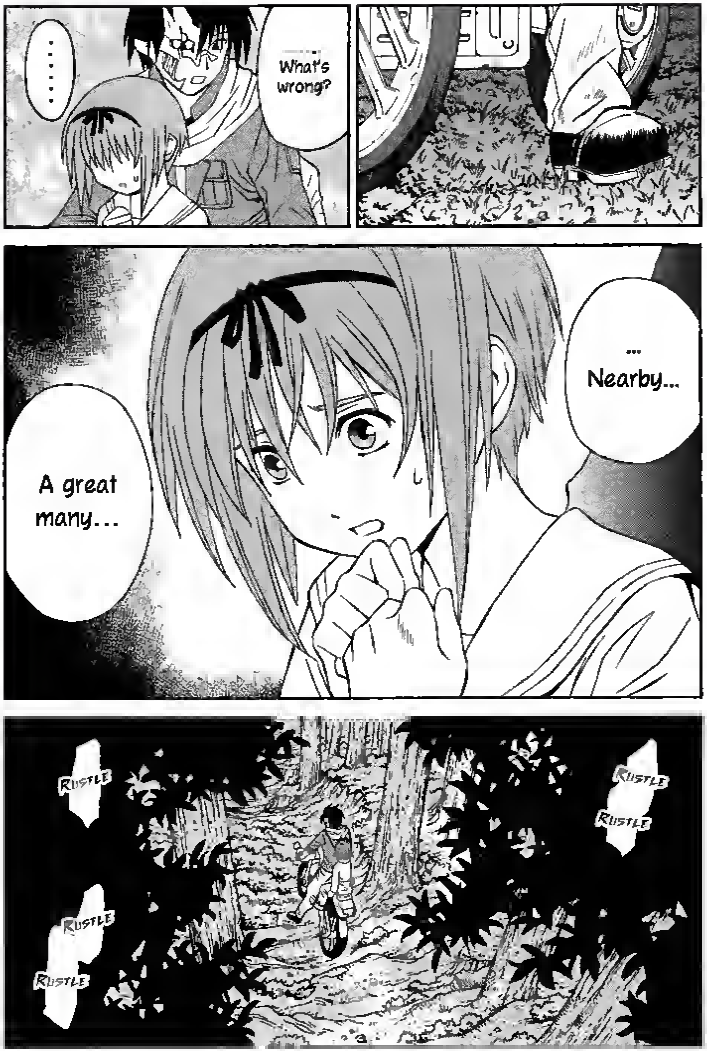
Ah... It's what we ought to be calling something like an Arethusa's larva.
This is...
I told you that it doesn't infect living humans, right?
Is it really okay?
It's okay if you don't take part in this
Stand back and observe
끄끅.

POLICE
7209
FN50719

There's a lot of patrol cars
I hate it.. They shoot at us and all..!!
Did something happen?


There's last night's incident that was in the Captain's points of caution.
"The theft of a corpse," or so she said.
...Then they won't check bikes...
Eh? What?

Yea.
Among the things the Captain was monitoring, there are some things you might get mixed up in.
Be careful
Heey, heey! Your tree-parts are still growing, aren't they?
They're different from yesterday
Which way is the Arethusa?
Dina?
Eh!
Ah... Um...
Over there-
?
No, that's wrong. There...??


.....
What's wrong?
...
Nearby...
A great many...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

Is it Sam?!
I don't know ...
There's no way that guy would be in a place like this.
Oh
Oh...
Well ...
Where's the closest one?

What about you?!
Take over. If it gets bad, you two run away.
Jim,
I'll be fine
Fall back and follow along.
If we get separated, wait an hour before you two come looking.

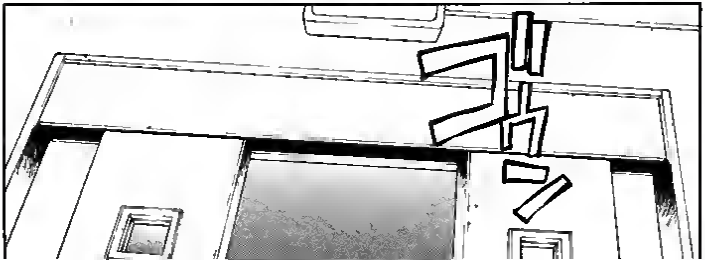
バサ
!!

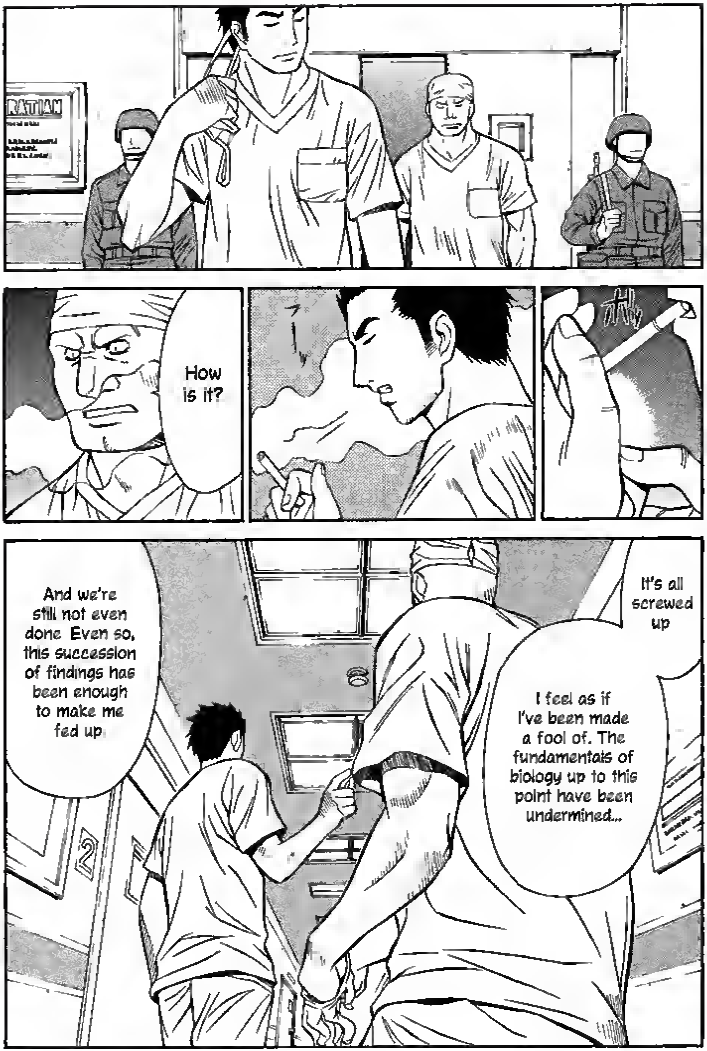
GIAAAA
GIAAAA
!!

SHIN!!
WHAT'S WRO-
DON'T COME HERE!!!
...Something like this...

Is it the same as me...?

CAW

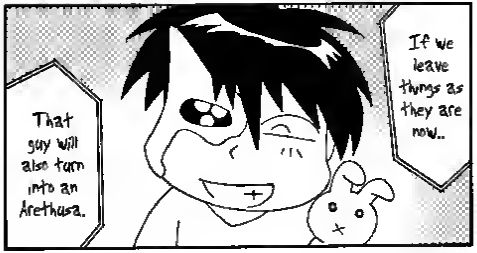

ゴゥン


How is it?
フー
It's all screwed up
I feel as if I've been made a fool of. The fundamentals of biology up to this point have been undermined...
And we're still not even done. Even so, this succession of findings has been enough to make me fed up.

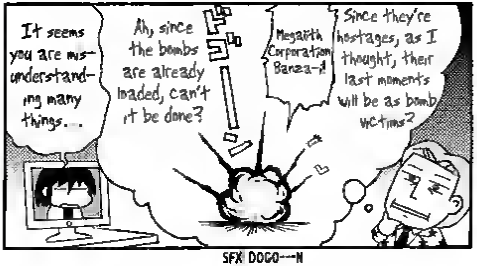
Within the dog's corpse, in the concealed interior..
Out of these, the master-piece...
Slender shoots were coiled around and forcibly pumping it.
The heart was beating!

……

ビクン



Soreyuke, President's Aide


It seems you are mis-understand-ing many things...
Ah, since the bombs are already loaded, can't it be done?
Megarith Corporation Banzai!
Since they're hostages, as I thought, their last moments will be as bomb victims?

SFX DOGO---N

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